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Reporting from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention
Work of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention

Progress report on the work of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention: report on the regional training workshops on the preparation of biennial update reports from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

The Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention, with the assistance of the secretariat, conducted two regional training workshops on the preparation of biennial update reports from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties): for the Latin America and the Caribbean region the workshop was held in Panama City, Panama, from 16 to 18 July 2014, and for the Asia-Pacific and Eastern European regions the workshop was held in Yerevan, Armenia, from 8 to 10 September 2014. The aim of the workshops was to enhance the capacity of national experts from non-Annex I Parties in using the "UNFCCC biennial update reporting guidelines for Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention" and raise awareness of the international consultation and analysis process. This report outlines the proceedings of the workshops and includes a summary of the discussions.

* This document was submitted after the due date in order to take into account the outcomes of the 13th meeting of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention, held in Yerevan, Armenia, on 11 and 12 September 2014.

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Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
I.	Introduction	1–6	3
	A. Mandate	1–4	3
	B. Scope of the note	5	3
	C. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation	6	3
II.	Summary of the proceedings	7–10	4
III.	Summary of the discussions	11–37	4
	A. Regional training workshop for the Latin America and the Caribbean region	14–26	5
	B. Regional training workshop for the Asia-Pacific and Eastern European regions	27–37	9
IV.	Conclusions	38–42	14
Annexes			
I.	Agenda for the regional training workshops on the preparation of biennial update reports from non-Annex I Parties		16
II.	Design, structure and content of the interactive mock exercises		21

I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), by decision 19/CP.19, decided to continue the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) for a period of five years, from 2014 to 2018.[1] The COP also decided that the CGE, in fulfilling its mandate, shall function in accordance with the revised terms of reference contained in the annex to the same decision.

2. As per the terms of reference contained in the annex to decision 19/CP.19, the CGE developed, at its first meeting of the year held in Bonn, Germany, on 27 and 28 January 2014, a work programme for the period 2014–2018.[2]

3. The CGE, in its work programme for 2014, agreed to conduct three regional training workshops for Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties) on the preparation of biennial update reports (BURs). However, the regional training workshop for the African region, planned to be held from 18 to 20 August 2014 in Lomé, Togo, was postponed to 23–25 February 2015 owing to the health concerns in the West Africa region.

4. The COP, by decision 19/CP.19, requested the CGE to submit a progress report annually on its work to the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) for its consideration at the sessions of the SBI held in conjunction with the sessions of the COP.[3]

B. Scope of the note

5. This report, prepared as a part of the progress report on the work of the CGE,[4] contains a summary of the proceedings of and discussions at the following regional training workshops for non-Annex I Parties on the preparation of BURs:

(a) The regional training workshop for the Latin American and Caribbean region on the preparation of BURs, held in Panama City, Panama, from 16 to 18 July 2014;

(b) The regional training workshop for the Asia-Pacific and Eastern European regions on the preparation of BURs, held in Yerevan, Armenia, from 8 to 10 September 2014.

C. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

6. The SBI, having considered this report, may wish to provide further guidance to the CGE, as appropriate, on the provision of technical assistance to non-Annex I Parties to enable them to fulfil their reporting obligations under the Convention.

[1] Decision 19/CP.19, paragraph 1.
[2] FCCC/SBI/2014/17.
[3] Decision 19/CP.19, paragraph 7.
[4] FCCC/SBI/2014/17.

II. Summary of the proceedings

7. In the second half of 2014, the CGE conducted two regional training workshops on the preparation of BURs:

(a) The regional training workshop for the Latin American and Caribbean region on the preparation of BURs was hosted by the Government of Panama in Panama City, Panama, from 16 to 18 July 2014. The workshop was attended by 32 national experts representing 25 non-Annex I Parties from the Latin American and Caribbean region, as well as by six CGE members as the resource persons and one representative from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) secretariat;

(b) The regional training workshop for the Asia-Pacific and Eastern European regions on the preparation of BURs was hosted by the Government of Armenia in Yerevan, Armenia, from 8 to 10 September 2014. The workshop was attended by 39 national experts representing 32 non-Annex I Parties from the Asia-Pacific and Eastern European regions, as well as by 10 CGE members as resource persons and one representative of the United Nations Development Programme.

8. The main objectives of the regional training workshops were, inter alia, to enhance the capacity of national experts in using the "UNFCCC biennial update reporting guidelines for Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention" (hereinafter referred to as UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs) to facilitate the preparation of their country's BURs; and to serve as a platform for the exchange of views, lessons learned and experiences relating to the process of and the preparation of national communications and BURs, as appropriate.

9. Both regional training workshops, conducted following similar agendas,[5] were designed to cover all of the core elements of the reporting in BURs through a very interactive approach, including presentations and mock exercises, which were further supplemented by interactive question and answer sessions.

10. A summary of the discussions that took place at the different sessions of the workshops is provided in chapter III below.

III. Summary of the discussions

11. The regional training workshops included seven substantive sessions covering:

(a) An overview of the measurement, reporting and verification framework for developing country Parties under the Convention, including the details of the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs; the process and outcome of international consultation and analysis (ICA); and support for the preparation of BURs;

(b) Reporting of national circumstances and institutional arrangements in BURs, reflecting on previous national communication experiences;

(c) Reporting of national greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories;

(d) Reporting on mitigation actions and their effects;

(e) Reporting on constraints and gaps, and related finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received.

12. For each of these sessions, the theoretical presentations covering relevant aspects of the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs were followed by interactive discussions made

[5] A workshop agenda template is included in annex II.

more targeted by a set of guiding questions. For the sessions on the reporting on mitigation actions and their effects, constraints and gaps, and related finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received, the presentations were followed by mock exercises, after which participants engaged in interactive discussions. The mock exercises were designed to provide participants with an indication of what information should be reported in BURs and how, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs.

13. The key elements of the discussions under each of the sessions are summarized below. A summary of the discussion under the session on "Support for the preparation of biennial update reports" is not presented separately; instead, it is discussed within the context of the substantive themes covered below.

A. Regional training workshop for the Latin America and the Caribbean region

1. Overview of the measurement, reporting and verification framework for developing countries under the Convention, including the context and the reporting guidelines on biennial update reports, and the process and outcome of international consultation and analysis

14. Some participants noted that certain elements of the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs are vague and therefore leave room for interpretation regarding the elements that need to be reported. The participants acknowledged that the training workshop helped them to gain to a better understanding of the elements that should be reported in BURs.

15. Some participants were concerned about the timing of the submission of the first BUR, which, as per decision 2/CP.17, paragraph 41(a), non-Annex I Parties, consistent with their capabilities and the level of support provided for reporting, are supposed to submit by December 2014. They also expressed concern with regard to the frequency of the submission of subsequent BURs of every two years. To that effect, they highlighted the need to establish or enhance suitable institutional arrangements. Others highlighted the need to explore how reporting under other processes could contribute to BURs.

16. A number of questions were raised seeking clarification on the differences between the "Guidelines for the preparation of national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention" and the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs. The presentations and subsequent discussions on the different themes covered during the workshop helped to answer most of those questions.

17. The discussions at this session also addressed measurement, reporting and verification of anthropogenic forest-related emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest area changes resulting from the implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, taking into account paragraph 71(b) and (c) of that decision.

18. The issue of funding for the preparation of BURs was also frequently raised by participants, in particular regarding the submission cycle of BURs, along with the timing of submission and approval of the project proposal to the GEF for funding of the preparation of BURs. To address this concern, some participants suggested that the project proposal for funding from the GEF cover two BUR submission cycles.

2. Reporting of national circumstances and institutional arrangements in biennial update reports, reflecting on previous national communication experiences

19. The interactive discussions on the reporting of national circumstances and institutional arrangements in BURs, reflecting on experiences from previous national communications, resulted in the following observations:

(a) There is no 'one-size-fits-all' institutional arrangement. While some core elements are prevalent in all institutional arrangements, overall the arrangements depend on the country's national circumstances and respective capabilities;

(b) For the purpose of preparing and submitting BURs in a timely manner, institutional arrangements cannot be classified as either "right" or "wrong"; they are acceptable as long as the information flows smoothly and is in line with the level of quality and detail, and other conditions set by the coordinating national body;

(c) Most countries have some form of institutional arrangements in place for the purpose of preparation of national communications. While some of these arrangements are institutionalized to a certain degree, others still operate on an ad hoc project basis and, hence, Parties with such arrangements are more likely to face challenges in meeting the enhanced reporting requirements under the Convention. Nevertheless, access to sufficient financial resources is one of the key elements in establishing, enhancing and maintaining robust institutional arrangements.

20. Participants recognized the following as some of the key elements that contribute to establishing, enhancing and maintaining robust institutional arrangements:

(a) Establishing formal institutional arrangements to retain skilled personnel and generate information in a timely manner and a suitable format, as well as engaging, over time, stakeholders and decision makers at the highest possible level, as appropriate;

(b) Raising awareness of the decision makers responsible for obtaining the 'buy-in' of other agencies;

(c) Appointing a single official entity, equipped with adequate financial and human resources, to support the implementation of BUR-related activities and act as a nodal agency to mobilize the required input from the various agencies involved in the preparation of BURs;

(d) Using templates to document the concepts and set-up of institutional arrangements to ensure that government officials and other stakeholders are aware of the steps involved and their roles and responsibilities in relation to the preparation of BURs.

3. Reporting of national greenhouse gas inventories

21. The interactive discussions at the session addressing the reporting of national GHG inventories in BURs resulted in the following observations:

(a) Data scarcity, as well as the confidentiality and accessibility of information, especially information from the private sector, might affect the BUR process and, in particular, impact the ability to produce time series data for national GHG inventories;

(b) For those non-Annex I Parties wishing to access the results-based payment system for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, it is important to ensure that the data and information on related activities submitted for the results-based payment are consistent with the national GHG inventories prepared and reported in their BURs;

(c) It is necessary to create a 'buy-in' process to change the perception of partner institutions and foster a sense of ownership, thereby enabling them to become more willing

and active contributors to the country's efforts in relation to the preparation of national GHG inventories every two years;

(d) For some participants, the update of the national GHG inventory every two years may be a challenge, considering that the statistical update of activity data that are relevant for some sectors of the national GHG inventory occurs only every 5 to 10 years;

(e) Some participants alluded to the fact that some non-Annex I Parties are already using the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) *2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* (hereinafter referred to as the 2006 IPCC Guidelines), and questioned how this would be treated during the ICA process.

22. Participants shared some ideas and suggestions that could help non-Annex I Parties to better cope with the need to produce an update of their national GHG inventories every two years, including:

(a) Putting in place formal arrangements to ensure that the process of producing national GHG inventories is internalized nationally, and the knowledge of the people that are trained and have the required skills is maintained over time;

(b) Enhancing stakeholder engagement;

(c) Continuing staff training to implement various IPCC methodologies available (e.g. the *Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* (hereinafter referred to as the Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines); the *Good Practice Guidance and Uncertainty Management in National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*; and the *Good Practice Guidance for Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry*);

(d) Creating a data gathering, processing and analysing tool, containing tables and forms with simple walk-through instructions, as appropriate, for use by the data providers to facilitate the provision of 'right' data in a suitable format and timely manner.

4. Reporting on mitigation actions and their effects

23. The interactive discussions on the session addressing the reporting on mitigation actions and their effects resulted in the following observations:

(a) The lack of clarity and detailed requirements in the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs were identified as key challenges to identifying and reporting information on mitigation actions and their effects. Further, the reporting templates designed by the CGE as a part of its training materials on the preparation of BURs were noted as being too detailed;

(b) Many of the mitigation actions and plans might only produce effects within a time frame that extends beyond the two-year BUR submission cycle. Hence, if the level of detail to be reported on mitigation actions is too high, there is a possibility that the BURs will become repetitive over time;

(c) Tracking progress made in the implementation of a mitigation action vis-à-vis the financial investment and GHG emissions by sources and removals by sinks was identified as a main challenge, underlined by the fact that the country teams responsible for formulating and implementing mitigation actions and for overseeing and tracking financial investments, as well as for preparing and coordinating the GHG inventory, do not necessarily interact on a regular basis. Another dimension associated with this challenge was linked to the lack of data on indicators that would allow a meaningful assessment of the progress made;

(d) Some participants highlighted the technical complexity of developing scenarios for GHG emission projections and mitigation assessment as another major

challenge, mainly related to a lack of available expertise and necessary data and information.

24. Participants shared some ideas and suggestions that could help non-Annex I Parties to better cope with the need to report on mitigation actions and their effects in the BURs every two years, including:

(a) In order to limit the human effort and the financial and administrative costs involved in the reporting of detailed information on mitigation actions and their effects, participants suggested the grouping of activities, as an initial step, to facilitate reporting at a higher level, either nationally or by sector, on policies, programmes and plans;

(b) Raising awareness on climate change mitigation and reporting requirements under the Convention among relevant stakeholders at all levels, including the private sector, to enhance the communication and exchange of information, and develop a more complete view of the mitigation actions under way in the country in the given period of time;

(c) Mainstreaming the knowledge among the national institutions to enhance the training of people involved in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of mitigation actions, for example by designing and deploying a 'training of trainers' programme in each ministry or institution involved;

(d) Further enhancing an understanding of the social and economic consequences of response measures;

(e) Using a tabular format, which was regarded as a practical approach to reporting on mitigation actions and their effects. To that effect, some participants suggested that it would be useful to include further instructions or examples in the training materials.

5. Reporting on constraints and gaps, and related finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received

25. The interactive discussions on the session addressing the reporting on constraints and gaps, and related finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received resulted in the following observations:

(a) The results of the mock exercise demonstrated that most participants have a different understanding of the level and type of information that needs to be reported as per the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs. Participants felt that the reporting on elements addressed under this session on a continuous basis implies a learning process that might take a minimum of two to three BUR reporting cycles to sufficiently mature;

(b) The absence of a legal framework for data sharing and the resultant restrictions on data access, as well as the absence of, or a weakness in, systems and procedures for collecting and organizing the information necessary for reporting in the BURs constitute major barriers and challenges that may hinder the preparation and submission of BURs in a timely manner;

(c) The cycle and timing related to funds from the GEF have been raised as an issue: given the fact that BURs need to be completed every two years, the necessary funding for the next BUR needs to be in place as soon as the current BUR is completed;

(d) Only one participant was able to identify a national agency that maintains a record of information on financial and technical support received. Therefore, reporting on such support will be challenging for other Parties;

(e) Participants also noted that the GEF funding for BURs should be increased to support the establishment and/or enhancement of adequate institutional arrangements and staffing, as well as the databases required to manage the information to be reported.

26. Participants shared some ideas and suggestions that could help non-Annex I Parties to report information on constraints and gaps, and related finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received in their BURs every two years, including:

(a) Establishing an online system to collect information on support needed and received by various organizations;

(b) Enhancing interaction between the nodal agency responsible for collecting and coordinating inputs from relevant stakeholders and the data providers to ensure that there is no double counting of the information to be reported and that the sources are comprehensively covered, to the extent possible.

B. Regional training workshop for the Asia-Pacific and Eastern European regions

1. Overview of the measurement, reporting and verification framework for developing countries under the Convention

27. During the discussions, the participants sought clarification on the period of time in which the information on finance, technology and capacity-building support needed and received is to be reported, in view of the fact that this time frame is normally between 5 and 10 years. The participants were informed that since the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs do not specify such a time frame, the decision on it is left to the individual countries to ensure that what is reflected in their BUR is funding that facilitates climate change reporting, that it is relevant to current and future situations, and that it takes double counting into consideration. Similar issues were raised with regard to mitigation scenarios, which are also long-term actions.

28. The participants raised concerns with regard to mitigation actions for developing countries which influence domestic budgets as, consequently, it is difficult for countries to commit to and take on such obligations. It is therefore unclear how this mitigation gap will be filled.

29. The participants also sought clarification as to how, during the technical analysis of BURs, the technical team of experts will treat BURs undergoing the technical analysis under the ICA process that contain information on national GHG inventories prepared using the 2006 IPCC Guidelines as opposed to the Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines. It was clarified that the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs refer only to the Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines.

2. Reporting of national circumstances and institutional arrangements in biennial update reports, reflecting on previous national communication experiences

30. The interactive discussions on the reporting of national circumstances and institutional arrangements in BURs, reflecting on experiences from previous national communications, resulted in the following observations:

(a) Most participants expressed the view that maintaining sustainable institutional arrangements that function effectively on a continuous basis is a key challenge owing to limitations in national resources and capacities available. Nevertheless, they were optimistic that the existing institutional arrangements have enough capacity to cope with the new challenge of preparing and submitting a BUR every two years;

(b) It was noted that the functions of the institutions involved in the process of and the preparation of BURs vary from country to country; however, the effectiveness of their functioning largely depends on the political will and support, as well as the

engagement and cooperation of the stakeholders. In this respect, better awareness and coordination among politicians, policymakers, decision makers and experts, together with enhanced financial and technical support, are viewed as elements that can contribute to the further strengthening of institutional arrangements;

(c) Insufficient financial resources, a lack of expertise and training, and political instability and support were highlighted as some of the key aspects that adversely impact the effective functioning of institutional arrangements;

(d) The need to have additional technical guidance on some of the methodological themes, such as quality assurance/quality control procedures, has also been raised;

(e) Some participants were of the view that that the obligation to submit BURs every two years can contribute to improving the institutional arrangements in the countries. At the same time, it can put an additional burden on both human and financial resources.

31. The participants identified some essential elements for setting up and maintaining institutional arrangements, such as:

(a) Existing institutional arrangements that are mostly project-based need to be institutionalized in a permanent system in order to respond effectively to the needs arising from the additional biennial reporting requirements related to the preparation of BURs and to cope with the ICA process. An organized, permanent arrangement would address issues relating to stakeholder engagement and the human resources needed to deal with such additional reporting requirements;

(b) The reporting process should be linked to the national development strategy, thus ensuring that it is mainstreamed and built on existing national processes;

(c) There is an additional need to include higher-level representation in the national reporting process, including further strengthening the arrangements for better coordination among politicians, policymakers and decision makers. If sufficient political support is provided, this should be further cemented by appropriate legislation and/or a legal framework, if necessary;

(d) The national coordinating entity should establish a dialogue platform to deal with gaps in cooperation between the coordinating entity, collaborating stakeholders and experts, which includes the provision of additional financial and technical support aimed at awareness-raising to ensure that all actors involved are fully aware of the BUR process and that their interest is increased;

(e) To support and sustain institutional arrangements, Parties should put in place continuous national funding and/or financial commitments and should take advantage of the GEF funding window to ensure that there is no time gap between the BUR reporting cycles and the funding;

(f) Continuous training of the experts involved in the process of and the preparation of national reports should take place, particularly to enhance the acquired knowledge of new experts, as this can address any setbacks created by internal or external staff movements;

(g) To effectively prepare for participation in the ICA process, in the future, provision of support during the ICA process could be included in the terms of reference of consultants and experts engaged to assist the country in the preparation of their national reports;

(h) The training should target those national experts involved in the internal review of BURs as a part of the quality assurance/quality control procedures, and should

also explore opportunities for providing incentives, including monetary payment, for the time spent on such reviews;

(i) Parties included in Annex to the Convention have elaborate and mature national systems for preparing national communications and national GHG inventories, which, among other things, include a legal and/or official framework for information collection and sharing. Non-Annex I Parties could benefit from an overview of such existing legal and/or official frameworks.

3. Reporting of national greenhouse gas inventories

32. The interactive discussions on the session addressing the reporting of national GHG inventories in BURs resulted in the following observations:

(a) Some participants noted that their existing institutional arrangements can adequately cope with the preparation of national GHG inventories, and the updating thereof every year. On the other hand, other participants highlighted the challenges related to financial and technical capacity, and were of the view that their existing institutional arrangements may not be able to adequately cope with the continuous demand for additional data owing to limited human, financial and technical resources. They also emphasized that insufficient data availability can affect the quality of the reporting and the timely submission of BURs;

(b) As per the scope of BURs, non-Annex I Parties are required to submit a national inventory report as a part of the information on national GHG inventories. However, many participants were unsure about the format and content of the national inventory report because the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs do not include such specific information;

(c) Countries continue to experience challenges in sustaining their national teams, and have limited technical capacity. This issue can be addressed via knowledge transfer between trained local experts and young professionals involved in the preparation of national GHG inventories;

(d) When updating the national GHG inventories every two years, it is important to take advantage of, and build on, other relevant past or ongoing initiatives and activities, such as the technology needs assessment, that sometimes require a review of the latest GHG emission estimates;

(e) Data availability and data archiving are still a challenge, which can be resolved by using the methods provided in the 2006 IPCC Guidelines;

(f) The challenges with regard to data archiving continue and persist, indicating the need for further improvement. The GHG inventory software is still viewed as complex for new professionals, who thus require continuous training.

33. Participants shared some ideas and suggestions that could help non-Annex I Parties to better cope with the need to produce an update of their national GHG inventories every two years, including:

(a) The continued challenge of internal coordination within teams and between ministries can be addressed by the formalization of institutional arrangements, including legal enforcement, such as through a memorandum of understanding between ministries or a national law, that will facilitate activities such as data collection and processing, and by the establishment of interministerial teams;

(b) Funding from the GEF and the national budget should be continuous to improve the quality of the national GHG inventory and to ensure the sustainability of the national inventory team;

(c) Capacity-building on a regional and national level should be continuous to enable the capacities of national experts to be developed continuously. The CGE, with the assistance of the secretariat, could identify Parties that require additional in-country capacity-building and training. The in-country training workshops could be designed for an extended period of two to three weeks;

(d) South–South and North–South cooperation should be encouraged, in particular in the sharing of activity data, emission factors and best practices;

(e) To enhance the sustainability of the national inventory team and institutional arrangements, it is important to have a continuous process of preparation of national GHG inventories. To that end, it would be advisable for those countries that are able to do so to prepare a GHG inventory annually, as opposed to biennially;

(f) Access to a template for the national inventory report would assist countries in the reporting process.

4. Reporting on mitigation actions and their effects

34. The interactive discussions on the session addressing the reporting on mitigation actions and their effects resulted in the following observations:

(a) Participants highlighted a number of challenges that they currently face or are likely to face in reporting information on mitigation actions and their effects. These include: (1) the level of detail required in the reporting; (2) the lack of a clear definition of some of the key reporting elements, such as mitigation actions, assumptions and methodologies; (3) the difficulty in quantifying some of the mitigation actions; (4) the lack of adequate institutional arrangements, especially for data collection and sharing among various stakeholders or agencies, and for monitoring and reporting the progress of implementation; and (5) defining the time frame in which the mitigation actions are to be reported;

(b) Some participants noted that reporting the information in a tabular format, which is more appropriate for the reporting of information that is quantitative in nature, restricts the information to the essential elements only; not all non-Annex I Parties will be in a position to quantify the information to be reported and, hence, may include qualitative information;

(c) In identifying and reporting indicators that define the progress of the implementation of mitigation actions, caution must be exercised to ensure that there is no confusion between "progress indicators" and "impact indicators". This is an important consideration since the level of understanding of the mitigation action(s) will be influenced by the metrics/indicators used. It was also recognized that not every indicator will show progress biennially and some may take more than two years for progress to be explicitly quantifiable or noticeable. Some indicators are easier to use than others, owing to the amount of information available in the national statistics. For those that are not as straightforward, additional efforts may be required, for example additional data collection.

35. Participants shared some ideas and suggestions that could help non-Annex I Parties to better cope with the need to report on mitigation actions and their effects in BURs every two years, including:

(a) Sharing lessons learned and exchanging information and results as sources of reference material. To that effect, the participants engaged in extensive discussions, sharing their experiences, lessons learned and the results achieved;

(b) Setting a clear definition of domestic measurement, reporting and verification in the country, which will prioritize mitigation actions to enable the most efficient resource allocation;

(c) Political buy-in, including the involvement of high-ranking political offices such as the Prime Minister;

(d) Data collection and data sharing among various stakeholders or agencies and regular joint meetings;

(e) The provision of financial resources to the relevant institutions;

(f) Cooperation with the national GHG inventory team and with the subnational authorities involved in the implementation and monitoring of the mitigation actions;

(g) The decentralization of information through a single coordinating body, which is responsible for the preparation of BURs, to aggregate and integrate information.

5. Reporting on constraints and gaps, and related finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received

36. The interactive discussions on the session addressing the reporting on constraints and gaps, and related finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received resulted in the following observations:

(a) In general, the participants seemed to have a clear understanding of and be comfortable with the reporting requirements for issues addressed at this session. However, there was still some confusion relating to the classification of the status of activities, and the balance between quantitative and qualitative information;

(b) There was also a general recognition among participants that it will be a significant challenge to comprehensively cover all of the information on the support needed and received in a country, taking into account the diversity of actors involved in formulating and mobilizing the support needed, and in implementing the support received. The challenge is sometimes further compounded by differences in the interpretation of the support received for activities that have climate change related benefits as a by-product of a development activity;

(c) Participants highlighted data availability, lack of transparency and accessibility to financial data, technical assistance and capacity-building support, and lack of coordination and a platform for consolidated national reporting as some of the key challenges or barriers in compiling and reporting information on constraints and gaps, and related finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received;

(d) Some participants reported that they have put in place a national committee for the reporting process, which enables them to access data from other sectors;

(e) The monetization of various types of support needed and received, such as in-kind contributions, is challenging for countries as it is not a straightforward exercise to put separate values on financial, capacity-building and technical support and technology transfer, which at times overlap significantly.

37. Participants shared some ideas and suggestions that could help non-Annex I Parties to better cope with the reporting on constraints and gaps, and related finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received in their BURs every two years, as follows:

(a) There is a need for coordination and a platform for clear reporting of the support needed and received for the climate change sector within the various ministries involved. The Ministry of Finance is, in general, identified as an example of an institution

that can act as a nodal agency that should be mandated to coordinate input from various national institutions and stakeholders;

(b) It is important to establish detailed and clear activities or categories of support needed and received. In addition, documenting, in the form of footnotes, the choices of activities or categories and the reporting thereof in the BUR is an equally important aspect as it will facilitate a better understanding and transparency of the information reported;

(c) Acquiring data from the sectoral institutions and other stakeholders involved requires time and planning and, hence, it is important that they are informed of the reporting requirements related to their corresponding contributions in advance to facilitate efficient resource planning on their part. To that effect, participants were of the view that the planning process needs to be established at the national and subnational levels;

(d) Collecting information from donors on the support provided, in particular of financial and technical nature, was seen as another means of reinforcing the information collection efforts at the national level.

IV. Conclusions

38. The participants were very active and engaged in the discussions and break-out group sessions throughout the workshops. This was the result of a good balance in the design of the workshop between presentations, interactive question and answer sessions and mock exercises. The guiding questions, which were prepared and distributed well in advance of the workshop, appear to have brought good results: participants were well prepared for the interactive discussions and mock exercises.

39. Overall, the CGE believes that the workshops were successful and that they managed to achieve the following:

(a) Enhancing familiarity with the information that needs to be reported in BURs (i.e. reporting requirements);

(b) Confirming the institutional arrangements that need to be put in place in order to generate the information to be reported (i.e. methods and tools) and the possible challenges that Parties may face in doing so;

(c) Enhancing the understanding of how information should be reported in accordance with the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs and the possible challenges that Parties may face in doing so, as well as of how the information in BURs is utilized (i.e. the ICA process, including the technical analysis);

(d) Explaining the possible gaps in the institutional, technical and financial capacity and in data and information, and identifying possible solutions or considerations to address them;

(e) Providing an opportunity for the exchange of views and networking among regional experts.

40. This view was further reinforced by the participants through the workshop evaluation survey, who acknowledged, overwhelmingly, that the workshops had helped to enhance their knowledge and expertise relevant and necessary for the preparation of their first BUR. They were also satisfied with the design and content of the training workshops.

41. The CGE nevertheless noted some opportunities for further improvement in the design and delivery of such training workshops in the future, which could include the following:

(a) Continuing to provide training materials to workshop participants in advance of the workshops while presenting an abridged version of the presentations during the workshops. Recognizing that experiences, knowledge and familiarity with the background materials may vary among the participants, the content of the presentations and exercises should be designed in a balanced manner, to suit all participants;

(b) Improving in-session hands-on exercises by:

(i) Improving and simplifying the reporting tables contained within the supplementary CGE training materials on BURs;[6]

(ii) Supplementing the mock exercises with fictitious case studies to enable experts to engage in more realistic and comprehensive hands-on exercises;

(iii) Requesting experts to bring national examples which can be used as case studies during the training sessions;

(c) Taking into account the following aspects when organizing the break-out groups, with a view to maximizing the instructive nature of and engagement in the break-out group sessions of the various exercises:

(i) Language: grouping together, to the extent possible, participants and CGE moderators speaking the same language;

(ii) Technical background, level of experience and involvement in the national communication and/or BUR process; for example, putting coordinators in one group and mitigation specialists in another;

(iii) Regional and national circumstances: grouping together countries from the same region and/or those with similar national circumstances;

(d) Encouraging the secretariat, in line with its resources, to explore ways to:

(i) Extend the duration of future BUR workshops, as three days are not sufficient to comprehensively cover all the themes of the BUR;

(ii) Invite additional experts from Parties to attend the workshop.

42. The CGE thanked those developed country Parties included in Annex II to the Convention and other developed country Parties that provided financial resources for the workshop. It also thanked the Government of Panama and the Government of Armenia for hosting the regional training workshops for non-Annex I Parties from the Latin American and Caribbean region, and from the Asia-Pacific and Eastern European regions, respectively.

[6] The reporting tables contained within the supplementary CGE training materials on BURs are meant to serve as one of the suggested tabular formats. Non-Annex I Parties may choose to design other tables that meet the requirements of the reporting guidelines on BURs.

Annex I

[English only]

Agenda for the regional training workshops on the preparation of biennial update reports from non-Annex I Parties

Day 1: 8 September 2014

8–9 a.m.	Registration
9–9.45 a.m.	**Session 1: Opening and overview of the workshop** • Opening remarks – *Chair of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE)* • Welcome – *secretariat* • Keynote address – *host country* • Self-introduction by participants • Workshop objectives and agenda – *secretariat*
10–10.30 a.m.	Coffee break
10.30–11.30 a.m.	**Session 2: Overview of the measurement, reporting and verification framework for developing countries under the Convention** • Biennial update report (BUR) context and guidelines – *secretariat* • International consultation and analysis (ICA): process and outcome – *secretariat* • Question and answer session
11.30 a.m.–12.30 p.m.	**Session 3: Support for the preparation of biennial update reports** • Results of the survey on problems and constraints, lessons learned and best practices – *secretariat* • Technical support for the preparation of BURs – *CGE Chair* • Supporting countries on the ground – *United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Environment Programme* • Question and answer session
12.30–2 p.m.	Lunch break
2–3.30 p.m.	**Session 4: Reporting of national circumstances and institutional arrangements in biennial update reports, reflecting on previous national communication experiences** • Presentation of factual elements for reporting national circumstances and institutional arrangements in BURs – *secretariat* • Reflecting on experiences from national communications: building sustainable institutional arrangements – possible tools, best practices and lessons learned, and approaches for reporting national circumstances and institutional arrangements in BURs – *CGE*

Day 1: 8 September 2014

	• Question and answer session
3.30–4 p.m.	Coffee break
4–5.30 p.m.	**Session 4: Reporting of national circumstances and institutional arrangements in biennial update reports, reflecting on previous national communication experiences** (continued)
	• Interactive break-out group discussion: (three groups: one CGE member as a moderator per break-out group with country representatives as participants) – *CGE* (a) What are some of the essential elements necessary for setting up and maintaining institutional arrangements that respond sufficiently to the needs arising from the preparation of BURs and from the ICA process? (b) What are some of the key factors and features of the national circumstances that facilitate the efficient functioning of institutional arrangements in the country; for example, political support, awareness among senior policymakers and decision makers, and support from external entities? (c) What are the key challenges in setting up and maintaining sustainable institutional arrangements that function on a continuous basis? (d) Are the current national institutional arrangements in place to deal with the preparation of national communications adequate to cope with the challenge of producing a BUR every two years? (e) Is there a clear understanding among the institutions involved of their role in the national institutional arrangements for the preparation of BURs in response to the requirements of the ICA process? For example, who will be responsible for providing feedback during the three-month period that the Party will have to review and comment on the draft summary report prepared by the team of technical experts? Who will be responsible for providing answers to the Party's questions during the facilitative sharing of views? Who will be responsible for dealing with the comments and questions received during the ICA process in the preparation of the subsequent BUR?
	• The moderator of each break-out group will provide a summary of the discussions of the break-out group to the plenary (five minutes for each moderator)
	• Interactive discussion

Day 2: 9 September 2014

9–10.30 a.m.	**Session 5: Reporting on mitigation actions and their effects**
	• Key provisions in the "UNFCCC biennial update reporting guidelines for Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention" (UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs) and approaches for reporting mitigation actions and their effects in the BUR – *CGE*
	• Reporting the methodologies and assumptions, objectives, steps taken or envisaged, progress of implementation and results achieved in the BUR: approaches and examples – *CGE*

Day 2: 9 September 2014

	• Question and answer session
10.30–11 a.m.	Coffee break
11 a.m.–12.30 p.m.	**Session 5: Reporting on mitigation actions and their effects** (continued)
	• Mock exercise (details of the mock exercise are contained in annex A to the agenda[1])
12.30–2 p.m.	Lunch break
2–3.30 p.m.	**Session 5: Reporting on mitigation actions and their effects** (continued)
	• Interactive break-out group discussion based on the mock exercise conducted in the previous part of the session: (three groups: one CGE member as a moderator per break-out group with country representatives as participants) – *CGE* (a) Are there any challenges in identifying and reporting information on mitigation actions and their effects using the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs? If so, what are they and how can they be addressed? (b) What are some of the challenges experienced in assessing the progress of implementation of mitigation actions and their effects? How have these challenges been addressed? (c) What preparations have been made or will be needed at the national level to enhance existing, or set up new, institutional arrangements to facilitate domestic measurement, reporting and verification as well as the reporting of information on mitigation actions every two years? (d) Are the institutions involved in the monitoring of the mitigation actions the same as those involved in the greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory preparation process?
	• The moderator of each break-out group will provide a summary of the discussions of the break-out group to the plenary (five minutes for each moderator)
	• Interactive discussion
3.30–4 p.m.	Coffee break
4–5.30 p.m.	**Session 6: Reporting of national greenhouse gas inventories**
	• Key provisions in the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs on the reporting of information on national GHG inventories in the BUR – *CGE*
	• Question and answer session
	• Overview of the tables and methods presented in the *Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*, referred to in decision 2/CP.17, annex III, the tools available for estimating emissions in national GHG inventories, the key considerations in applying potential updates to activity data, and the minimum requirements with regard to inventory years, frequency and submission dates – *CGE*
	• Question and answer session

[1] Not reproduced in this document.

Day 3: 10 September 2014

9–10.30 a.m.	**Session 6: Reporting of national greenhouse gas inventories** (continued)
	• Dealing with the reporting of elements that are encouraged: GHG inventory preparation and management, compilation, documentation and archiving, and final inventory approval processes/procedures – *CGE*
	• Question and answer session
10.30–11 a.m.	Coffee break
11 a.m.–12.30 p.m.	**Session 6: Reporting of national greenhouse gas inventories** (continued)
	• Interactive break-out group discussion: (one CGE member as a moderator for each of the three break-out groups with country representatives as participants) – *CGE*
	(a) As per the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs, the scope of the BUR includes the provision of an update on the national GHG inventory, including a national inventory report. Are there current national institutional arrangements in place to deal with the preparation of the national GHG inventory, and can they adequately cope with the challenge of producing updates every two years?
	(b) What are some of the key considerations that Parties need to take into account when preparing national GHG inventories and updating the data every two years?
	(c) What are the specific challenges your Party may face in fulfilling the following requirements contained in decision 2/CP.17 and the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs:
	– The first BUR submitted by non-Annex I Parties shall cover, at a minimum, the inventory for the calendar year no more than four years prior to the date of the submission, or more recent years if information is available, and subsequent BURs shall cover a calendar year that does not precede the submission date by more than four years;
	– Any change to the emission factors may be made in the subsequent full national communication;
	– Each non-Annex I Party is encouraged to provide a consistent time series covering the years reported in the previous national communication;
	– Are there any additional challenges in developing and reporting national GHG inventories using the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs? If so, what are they and how can they be addressed?
	• The moderator of each break-out group will provide a summary of the discussions of the break-out group to the plenary (five minutes for each moderator)
	• Interactive discussion
12.30–2 p.m.	Lunch break
2–3.30 p.m.	**Session 7: Reporting on constraints and gaps, and related finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received**
	• Key provisions in the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on BURs and approaches for reporting constraints and gaps, and related finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received – *CGE*

	• Question and answer session
	• Mock exercise (details of the mock exercise are contained in annex A to the agenda)
3.30–4 p.m.	Coffee break
4–5.30 p.m.	**Session 7: Reporting on constraints and gaps, and related finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received** (continued)
	• Interactive break-out group discussion based on the mock exercise conducted in the previous part of the session: (one CGE member as a moderator for each of the three break-out groups with country representatives as participants) – *CGE* (a) What are the key barriers/challenges/bottlenecks that may hinder the preparation and timely submission of BURs? (b) What are the key barriers/challenges/bottlenecks in compiling and reporting information on constraints and gaps, and related finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received? (c) What are some of the possible approaches that could be used to identify and report, in a robust manner, constraints and gaps, and related financial, technical and capacity-building needs, as well as development and transfer of technology needs? (d) What are some of the key considerations that Parties need to take into account when compiling and reporting every two years information on financial, technical, capacity-building, development and transfer of technology support received for climate change activities as well as for the preparation of the BUR?
	• The moderator of each break-out group will provide a summary of the discussions of the break-out group to the plenary (five minutes for each moderator)
	• Interactive discussion
5.30–5.50 p.m.	**Feedback and evaluation**
5.50–6 p.m.	**Session 8: Concluding session**

Annex II

[English only]

Design, structure and content of the interactive mock exercises

I. Note to the participants

1. All the participants are urged to bring to the workshop copies of their country's latest national communication submitted under the Convention and any other relevant background material that was used in the preparation of that document, either in print or in digital format. This information will serve as a valuable input to be consulted during the mock exercises detailed below.

2. It is also strongly recommended, as a preparatory activity, that participants read and are thoroughly familiar with their latest national communication submitted under the Convention prior to attending the workshop. This will also serve as important background for the interactive discussions.

II. Mock exercise on session 6: reporting on mitigation actions and their effects

3. Each participant will be provided with three suggested tabular formats to cover the information on mitigation actions and their effects, to the extent possible, including:

(a) The name and description of the mitigation action, including information on the nature of the action, the coverage (i.e. sectors and gases), the quantitative goals and the progress indicators;

(b) Information on methodologies and assumptions;

(c) The objectives of the action and steps taken or envisaged to achieve that action;

(d) Information on the progress of implementation of the mitigation actions, the underlying steps taken or envisaged, and the results achieved, such as the estimated outcomes (metrics depending on type of action) and estimated emission reductions, to the extent possible;

(e) Information on international market mechanisms;

(f) One of the objectives of the "UNFCCC biennial update reporting guidelines for Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention", contained in decision 2/CP.17, annex III, is to facilitate reporting, to the extent possible, on any economic and social consequences of response measures.

4. Each participant will be instructed to choose one mitigation action (previously communicated by the Party concerned or created by the participant). Based on the chosen mitigation action, the participant will be asked to individually fill in, to the extent possible, the three tables provided below with the information listed in paragraph 3(a–f) above. Thirty minutes will be allotted for this individual exercise. Members of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) and the secretariat will be available as resource persons to facilitate and assist the participants in undertaking the exercise.

Figure 1
Suggested tabular format 6.1: description of mitigation actions

Name: state the name of the action here				
Description: provide a description of the action here and further details in the columns below				
Nature of the action	**Coverage**		**Quantitative goals**	**Progress indicators**
	Sectors	Gases		
Example	i.	i.	i.	i.
	ii.	ii.	ii.	ii.

Figure 2
Suggested tabular format 6.2: details of mitigation actions

Name: state the name of the action here	
Information	
Methodologies	Assumptions
i.	1.a
ii.	2.a
	3.b

Objectives and progress of implementation				
Objectives of the action	**Steps taken or envisaged to achieve the action**		**Results achieved such as estimated outcomes (metrics depending on the type of action)**	**Estimated emission reductions, to the extent possible**
	Steps taken	Steps envisaged		
i.	i.	i.	i.	i.

	ii.	ii.	ii.	ii.
Information on international market mechanisms				
Information on international mechanisms relevant to the implementation of the action				

Figure 3
Suggested tabular format 6.3: reporting information on any economic and social consequences of response measures

Response measures action	**Social and economic consequences from the response measures action**	**Challenges and barriers to address the consequences**	**Support needed to address the consequences**
1. In this column, non-Annex I Parties could provide a description of specific action(s) of response measures	*2. In this column, Parties could report on the consequences of the specific action identified in column 1, including any information on how the consequence has been linked to the action* *The information should be disaggregated in terms of intensity and magnitude as: low; medium or moderate; and high (to create specific criteria for disaggregation)*	*3. In this column, Parties could report on challenges and barriers in addressing coping with the consequences identified in column 2.* *Parties may also provide further information under the section on reporting finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received*	*4. In this column, Parties could report on the support needed for economic diversification.* *Parties may also provide further information under the section on reporting finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received*

5. At the end of the exercise, the tables will be collected by the moderators and three break-out groups will be formed at which the tables will be presented by the participants (two to three minutes each). After the presentations, the break-out groups will be encouraged to identify the areas where no information was available and/or the reporting of such information was not considered to be possible by the participants, as well as the challenges involved in filling in the tables.

6. The moderators of the break-out groups will summarize the presentations and subsequent discussions and make a presentation to the plenary as the initial inputs for the continuation of the session.

II. Mock exercise for session 7: reporting on constraints and gaps, and related finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received

7. Each participant will be provided with three suggested tabular formats to cover the information on constraints and gaps, and related finance, technology and capacity-building needs and support received, as follows:

(a) Constraints and gaps, and related financial, technical and capacity-building needs;

(b) Financial resources, technology transfer, capacity-building and technical support received from the Global Environment Facility, Parties included in Annex II to the Convention and other developed country Parties, the Green Climate Fund and multilateral institutions for activities relating to climate change, including for the preparation of the current BUR;

(c) Technology needs, which must be nationally determined, and technology support received.

(d) Based on the information reported in the latest national communications submitted under the Convention and/or any other relevant background documents, each participant will be asked to individually fill in the tables with the information requested in items (a–c) above. Thirty minutes will be allotted for this individual exercise. CGE members and representatives of the secretariat will be available to facilitate the exercise and assist the participants.

Figure 4
Suggested tabular format 7.1: reporting information on financial, technical and capacity-building needs and support

	Status (ongoing/ planned/completed)	**Overall support needed**	**Support received**	**Additional support needed**
Activity 1				
Activity 2				
Activity 3				
Activity 4				

Figure 5
Suggested tabular format 7.2: reporting information on nationally determined technology needs and technology support received

	Reporting period:			
	Status (ongoing/planned/ completed)	**Overall support needed**	**Support received**	**Additional support needed**
Activity 1				
Activity 2				
Activity 3				
Activity 4				

Figure 6

Suggested tabular format 7.3: reporting information on support received: technical, financial, capacity-building and transfer of technology

Reporting period:						
Type		Description of support, including USD amount (exchange rate)				
		Multilateral sources	Funding from Annex II and other developed country Parties	Party contribution	Multilateral financial institutions, including regional development banks	Other sources
Preparation of biennial update report	*Financial*					
	Capacity-building					
	Technical					
	Technology transfer					
Climate change activities contained in the biennial	*Financial*					
	Capacity-building					

update report	*Technical*					
	Technology transfer					

8. At the end of the exercise, the tables will be collected by the moderators and three break-out groups will be formed at which the tables will be presented by the participants (two to three minutes each). After the presentations, the break-out groups will be encouraged to identify the areas where no information was available and/or the reporting of such information was not considered to be possible by the participants, as well as the challenges involved in filling in the tables.

9. The moderators of the breakout groups will summarize the presentations and subsequent discussions and make a presentation to the plenary as the initial inputs for the continuation of the session.